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12 February 1981

East Europe Report

POLITICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

(FOUO 2/81)

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

'L'EXPRESS' VIEWS USSR ATTITUDE VIS-A-VIS POLAND'S SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

Paris L'EXPRESS in French 6 Dec 80 pp 115-116

[Article by Georges Valance: "Poland: Between Hope and Threat"]

[Text] Heard in Warsaw: "The big problem is the attitude of the Russians. That is the basic element of all our thoughts and actions."

From one of our special correspondents:

Being between hope and threat is already a way of life for Poles. On the morning of 3 December in the Warsaw snow they were waiting in long lines in front of kiosks for the newspapers which had been delayed so they could give an account of the plenary meeting of the Central Committee which ended in the middle of the night. On reading them the Poles were reassured and disappointed. Reassured because the first secretary, Stanislaw Kania, had committed himself to carrying on dialogue with the Solidarity trade union movement. Disappointed because the Poles were still not able to tell one day what the next day would be like. Edward Gierek's policy had been appropriately condemned, the former first secretary and seven of his teammates had been punished, but neither Kania nor the prime minister, Jozef Pinkowski, had been able to define a new economic policy, or, most of all, to say how they would face impending shortages.

Was the plenary session useless? No, it was more like a holding pattern. And something did occur in that meeting of 140 apparatchiks. They too have learned how to express themselves since summer: 43 stood up to try and outdo each other in their denunciation of the past leadership. The Gierek team was kept out of the picture with a couple of significant except ones: the minister of defense, who had been opposed to sending the army against the Baltic strikers, and the Council of Ministers deputy chairman Mieczyslaw Jagielski, signer of the Gdansk agreements.

Is this then an opening-up? No, it is not as simple as that either. Kania wants to pursue a dialogue with the Solidarity but he points the finger at "the anti-socialist elements infiltrated into the movement." Likewise promotions are being made in careful doses: "pragmatists" like Tadeusz Grabski, who since September has been in charge of relations with the trade unions, or like Tadeusz Fiszbach, the party's number one in Gdansk who is rated highly by the Solidarity, are going up in the Party apparatus, but so is General Mieczyslaw Moczar, former minister of

internal affairs, who is passing himself off more and more as a savior hunting down the "thieves." He is an enigmatic person: "In the past," a sociologist said, "he mobilized nationalist sentiment against Jews. Today there are no more Jews and we know where Polish nationalist sentiment is directed." But PRAVDA has just devoted three articles to him filled with praise. However, nothing has really played out: either the choice of men or the policy line of the government.

Nowadays all of Poland seems to be hesitating, to be pausing, the party leadership and also the Solidarity movement. Public opinion, which is anxious about impending shortages, fears anarchy which would make them even greater. Not to mention the big question about the attitude of the USSR which is in everybody's mind. In Warsaw, if you talk about the Soviet threat to the person you are speaking with, he will invariably respond: "You Westerners, you are much more afraid than we are, and you think about it too much." If you do not say anything then at the end of the conversation he will come out with: "Of course the big problem is the attitude of the Russians. That is the basic element of all our thoughts and actions."

Curiously enough, Stanislaw Kania and Lech Walesa seem to have the same concern: to obtain a pause to strengthen their respective apparatuses, one of them, the Party's being badly shaken, and the other, Solidarity's, still being more of a nebulous thing than a structured movement. A former minister offers this explanation in the form of a joke: "Walesa, with the Cardinal as a middleman, has made peace with Kania. Kania has made peace with Brezhnev. But they still have to make peace with their troops."

The first secretary, who can take advantage of some genuine confidence in him within the Solidarity (in 1976 he was opposed to resorting to force), must face a two-fold pressure. The party apparatus is worried about its privileges, and the rank and file are pushing for reforms and more democracy. Out of the 3 million Party members, 2 million probably belong to the Solidarity, and not just because they want to have a communist influence on its political line.

"Put yourself in the place of a local party official," one of Walesa's experts said. "In a meeting in the old days things were easy: there was a room decorated with red flags, there was a red tablecloth on the table, he gave a speech, and there was applause. Everything finished up with a hearty dinner with plenty of wine to wash it down. Nowadays, he has not said two words when he is interrupted: 'And about your villa; how did you build it? And what about your car; how did you buy it?' You just cannot live any more." In the plenary meeting of the Central Committee, people asked for investigations of assets acquired over the last 10 years by party officials. It is only natural for people on the "Nomenklatura" to be alarmed. There is even a story that some members of the Central Committee have signed a document expressing concern about growing anarchy and government inefficiency which in their view calls for "resorting to other means," or, to put it plainly, to the Soviet Union.

But pressure from the rank and file is such that the plenary meeting had to take it into account. Sanctions taken against the former ruling team were first and foremost to pacify them by throwing them a "base of responsibility for the past" to chew on.

One part of the Solidarity movement would of course like to make use of the Party's fragility in order to press its advantage. But Walesa and Solidarity's Coordination Committee are doing everything to calm down this enthusiasm. On 27 November, working away like crazy all night to stop strike action at the Huta Warszawa steelworks, Walesa did not pull any punches in his warnings: "I am afraid. The Army is there, and it's ready to occupy the factories. The government has tanks and rockets of all kinds at its disposal." Actually Walesa has two concerns in appealing like this for caution: organizing Solidarity, and avoiding anarchy, which would cause a reversal of public opinion.

Solidarity with its 10 million followers has become impressively strong and swept away the old trade unions, which acted as transmission belts for the Party and the regime. The old group of affiliated trade unions is making pathetic efforts to survive: it is going to be dissolved and be replaced by a more flexible coordination committee in Solidarity's image. The branch unions are being renamed "independent" unions or "self-governing" unions. In negotiations on social issues they are the ones crying the loudest, and they have just sent Walesa a whining letter proposing a common program. Nevertheless, Solidarity still has an intrinsic weakness: its organization. "We must build structure, elect representatives, and convene a congress so we can set an economic and social policy as a whole." That is what Prince Geremek, one of Walesa's experts, feels. Solidarity is afraid of agents provocateurs who might infiltrate into its disordered organization. Several incidents took place before the plenary meeting. Pamphlets were handed out and display windows broken in the Centrum stores in downtown Warsaw by a commando group of youths wearing Solidarity badges. A critical piece of equipment for car assembly lines was stolen. Explosives and inflammable materials were discovered piled up in a mine. All of that was a bit "thick." Subtler perhaps is the activity of hardline elements which have infiltrated. That is why disciplined control over the struggle has priority: at the time of the plenary meeting, most of the strikes had come to an end.

Lech Walesa also fears a turnaround in public opinion. "A large part of the population is starting to be afraid," he says "Let's let people catch their breath, let's let them have a rest. The holidays are coming up" Television reports an opinion poll showing that the people's hopes are diminishing. Actually, the Poles nowadays show a curious mixture of feelings: pride and fear, hope and skepticism. Pride in the strength and originality of their movement. Fear, naturally, at their borders. Hope for unprecedented change in a society blocked from changing for so long. Skepticism faced with the scope of the job and the difficulties of the moment.

"Today Belongs To Us"

After the bad autumn harvests a fearsome winter is beginning. Butter and cheese are lacking, but also sugar, cooking oil, lard, potatoes and, in this mining country, even coal. Some power stations only have three days worth of reserves. In the evening power cutoffs plunge some districts of Warsaw into darkness. The capital is still supplied on a priority basis, while the provincial towns lack everything.

However, these everyday worries are not enough to erase the hopes which gave rise to Solidarity.

At Ursus, in the outskirts of Warsaw, the workers are copying out a poem which starts out like this: "Today belongs to us. The future is unknown, but we must act as if it belonged to us."

PHOTO CAPTIONS

1. A two-faced ghost from the past, General Mieczyslaw Moczar. The Party's man in Gdansk, Tadeusz Fiszbach.

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CSO: 3100

WALESA INTERVIEWED BY 'PARIS MATCH'

Paris PARIS MATCH in French 19 Sep 80 p 28

[Interview with Lech Walesa by J.M. Caradec'h: "My Wife Trembles for Me"; date and place not given]

[Text] [Question] How did your struggle fo trade-union freedoms begin?

[Answer] In March 1976, I was a factory delegate; during a lecture at a meeting, I said a little loudly: "I'm staying home from now on." Subsequently, I protested against all the contracts, and I was "thanked" at the time. In 1979, I was dismissed from a construction-materials factory, the "Zreb." Next, I started working in an electrical-assembly shop, and it was there that the famous affair of the Workers' Commissions broke out: in brief, the strike. It was in January of that year that the strikes began.

[Question] How did you dare to do that?

[Answer] I had already conducted a strike in 1970. If we lost, it was because I did not prove a good enough negotiator, or active enough. Perhaps I was not even capable of being one; if I had had at that time the competence I have acquired in the meantime, the strike would have succeeded, just as now. But at that time, no one was capable of conducting it successfully. This time in the electrical assembly shop, for example, 50 percent of the workers were our people; this was my third experience of this type, and I was certain of victory.

[Question] You were aware of the implications that this entailed for you?

[Answer] Of course, I was absolutely clear about it. But my wife--she was trembling. She is still trembling.

[Question] Was there a moment in your life that changed everything?

[Answer] Yes, the last strike.

[Question] And some particularly creative moments?

[Answer] Life itself is a continual creation.

[Question] You told me that you fear God. What is He for you?

[Answer] Everything I do depends on Him, and I do it thanks to Him. Without Him, I would be nothing. If I were a materialist, I would get enough proposals to be, in a word, dispensed from working. But I have a conscience, and this conscience forbids me to get into affairs of that kind.

[Question] Where does your deep faith come from?

[Answer] From my parents. It is they and the school that educated me, and in the school, religion was always present.

[Question] Do you consider your parents more Catholic than you?

[Answer] My mother was a deep believer.

[Question] What are your relations with the power that the [Catholic] Church represents in Poland?

[Answer] I have very good relations with the Church. I have had encouragement and evidence of support from the Catholic hierarchy. But the Church achieves its purposes on its own, and I achieve mine.

[Question] What importance do your wife and your family hold for you?

[Answer] Major importance. There are eight of us. They are important, even as against 35 million Poles. I invite you to celebrate my birthday, on 29 September.

[Question] Your wife has told me that you are not concerned enough about your children at present.

[Answer] That is true, but I also have 35 million children today.

[Question] Do you share your activities with your wife?

[Answer] No, categorically not. I want her to remain a wife.

[Question] You are in the process of moving into a big apartment that has been offered to you by the municipality. Don't you believe that someone wants to "buy" you?

[Answer] It is the vaivode that has offered me this apartment, and I have accepted because I have a right to it. With my six children, I was living in a two-room apartment. Now I have five rooms, plus a room for an office. This is not letting myself be "bought"; I am only taking my due, even if it is very late in coming. I will continue to say what I think, as I have done for more than 10 years.

[Question] How do you interpret all this sudden largesse by the authorities: the trade-union building, your apartment?

[Answer] For the moment, I am not trying to understand it, I am taking advantage of it; it is certainly not going to last.

[Question] When did you note your influence on others?

[Answer] Oh, as early as primary school!

[Question] You have shaken the power to its foundations; only very strong persons are capable of that.

[Answer] But I had power too.

[Question] Are you sure of your strength?

[Answer] I will not retreat, unless I were persuaded I was wrong. No one can change my point of view when I am sure I am right. I can be beaten down by force, but my convictions cannot be shaken.

[Question] Have you experienced a moment, or a prayer, that has given you special strength?

[Answer] Yes. The confidence of the masses gave me strength when they prayed for my health during the strike.

[Question] You have said that you never understood politics. Yet you are the principal political personage of the recent events. Are you aware of this--you and your family?

[Answer] I see it clearly, but I shun political personages, or being one. My belief is in my heart.

[Question] One senses a radiant personality in you.

[Answer] I base myself on what I feel, and others feel it in turn.

[Question] Are you aware of the weight of the problems that await you? Are you sure you will have enough strength to live through this time?

[Answer] Yes, I am aware of it, because this strike has been a strike for everyone.

[Question] You have been named to create the first free trade union in Gdansk. Will you be its secretary general?

[Answer] I hope so, but it is not certain. There is going to be a democratic vote when the setting-up of the trade unions is completed. For the time being, I have placed myself at the head of the trade union on my own, but this is only temporary, until the elections.

[Question] Are you happy to have won the first round?

[Answer] I am not thinking about good luck, I am thinking about the work that remains to be done. I think I am too fatigued to be happy, and I have health problems with my heart. I should rest, but I do not have the time.

[Question] Are you uneasy about the future?

[Answer] No, I have faith.

[Question] Aren't you thinking about writing a journal relating this most recent period in your fight for the free trade unions?

[Answer] I have written part of one, but my papers have been confiscated.

PHOTO CAPTION

p 28 In his new premises, Lech Walesa has hung up a portrait of the Pope.

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CSO: 3100

WALESA INTERVIEWED ON SOVIET INTERVENTION INTENTIONS

Paris PARIS MATCH in French 28 Nov 80 p 38

[Report on an interview with Lech Walesa by Georges Menager: "Walesa Comments on PARIS MATCH's Polish Survey--'Yes, We Will Resist the Russians'"]

[Text] I met Lech Walesa. It was not without difficulty that on Monday 17 November I was able to get to his new apartment in Gdansk, guarded by the militia night and day. The reason for my visit was to present him with a copy of PARIS MATCH containing our clandestine survey conducted among the Poles, for him to comment on. It had taken me a lot of perseverance and a lot of good luck to obtain a talk with the chief trade-unionist of the Solidarity movement, the only man in an Eastern country in 35 years who has been able to get the communist government to give in. Indeed, Lech Walesa is rarely at home. He runs around the country, going from meeting to meeting, from speech to conference. He sleeps only 4 hours per night. He stops off with his family once a week. Despite his responsibilities, despite his lack of free time, despite his weariness, Lech Walesa nevertheless agreed to receive me. I face him with the interpreter. The most celebrated Pole after Pope John Paul II is clearly an exhausted, strained man, with hollow cheeks and rings under his eyes. He is not ignorant of the fact that the world is attentive to what he does and listens to what he says. He knows that Poland expects a sort of redemption from him. He knows the risks he is running. Also, everything that is said or written about him beyond the Iron Curtain does not leave him indifferent.

The interpreter presents PARIS MATCH to him. Slowly, he reads to him the 18 questions to which 500 of his fellow countryment replied between 29 September and 3 November. Lech Walesa listens, then says in his dry voice: "It is a good idea to have carried out a survey among us. These results are very important." He reflects, then adds:

"If there were free elections tomorrow with several parties in the field, I would vote for the Christian Democrats," Walesa confides to me (34 percent of Poles are of this opinion, while only 3 percent would give their votes to the Communist Party).

To the question "Do you think the agreements will be eroded by the government little by little, or really applied definitively?" he replies to me: "There will be attempts to erode them, but they will not succeed. As for total and definitive fulfillment of the agreements, one does not believe this either. A compromise will have to be reached. In any case, these agreements will be applied with a great deal of pain."

Regarding the USSR, the leader of Solidarity is convinced that "direct intervention is 100-percent impossible," but he thinks that the Soviets "may try to intervene in-

directly. But they have no chance." If, despite everything, they intervened, Walesa would resist, as would 66 percent of his compatriots: "In my opinion, the percentage of resisters would be far higher than indicated by your survey."

On the other hand, the trade unionist is not in agreement on the subject of the replies to the question "Who, in your opinion, best symbolizes Poland today?" (The survey put the Pope at the top with 73 percent, followed by Walesa himself with 18 percent, and Stanislaw Kania with 4 percent).

"I consider that the percentage for the Pope is too high. The one who symbolizes our country best is Cardinal Wyszynski. It is the primate of Poland who should have received 73 percent of the votes. The Pope has, in effect, left us. He has another mission in the world. His task today is international. I find that there are too many votes for the Pope and not enough for Kania." On all the problems of daily life, Lech Walesa sums up his fellow citizens' gripes in a few trenchant expressions: "Buying power? Myself, I don't buy anything. My relations with the administration? Poor. My leisure time? I don't have any. Social health care? I am not happy with it: one is afraid to ask for treatment. Working conditions? They're OK, they're coming along; they're becoming almost acceptable. Food supply? Not bad, but it could be better. Housing? I'm happy with my new apartment. Everything is expensive in Poland, but when we've got hold of the raises we're asking for, it will be much better."

Like 78 percent of the Poles, the man of Gdansk thinks that all the same, one lives better in his country than in the Soviet Union. In no case does he envision some day living elsewhere than in his own country. But if he were forced into exile, he would choose, in this order, the United States, France and Sweden (this order conforms with our survey except for the FRG, which the Poles had put in third place).

Finally, for Walesa "the USSR is nothing other than a big brother whom one has not chosen." And while, like most of his fellow citizens, he has "a good opinion" of Valery Giscard d'Estaing, Helmut Schmidt and Jimmy Carter, he condemns the totality of the Marxist system, and sums up in a few scornful words the extraordinary disillusion of an entire nation harassed but still indomitable: "Brezhnev, Castro: don't know...."

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POLAND

STUDENTS SHARE VIEWS WITH 'PARIS MATCH' CORRESPONDENT

Paris PARIS MATCH in French 19 Sep 80 pp 31-32

[Article by Jean-Michel Caradec'h: "What the CP Faithful Told Me"]

[Text] The premises of the Communist students of Warsaw is in a basement. A sort of cellar very much of the Saint-Germain-des-Pres type, smeared with graffiti-slogans, quick little poems and simple-minded drawings. Its aesthetic is a compromise between that of a clubroom for retarded adolescents and a Marxist-Leninist scout headquarters. Marx's portrait reigns supreme over an office littered with official publications and dirty teacups. An iconoclastic hand has gagged the illustrious old man with a stamp pad.

The Communist Youth official, a strapping big fellow of the chief-educator type, with glasses, pipe, and small beard, is thoroughly alarmed at the throng that has gathered because of the small notice posted on the door of the headquarters.

"At 1800 hours today, information meeting on trade-unionism called by the Communist students of the Sygma group. A representative of the official trade union will answer questions." The 200 or 300 students and professors who press at the entrance will not all be able to get into the room. "There have never been so many people at a party meeting," I am assured by Lourek, a Warsaw sociology student who serves as my interpreter. The meeting is well organized. A Communist student has brought back some tape recordings from Gdansk, and for 2 hours, the students listen religiously to the details of the negotiations between Walesa and vice premier Jagielski.

Even though the strike at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk had ended 3 days earlier, the fragmentary information that had appeared in the press and on television had left all Poland craving for news. Certain students who had come with tape recorders were in turn recording what came out of the sputtering loudspeakers. A little later, they will go over these recordings in another faculty or even transmit to another city by telephone these documents and information of which they are so deprived.

Now it is time for the discussion so eagerly awaited. Unfortunately, the functionary from the official trade union is not there. "He has been held up" is the clumsy explanation by the party official in response to the students' smiles and snickers. "We are going to try to answer your questions," he finally declares courageously.

They are not long in coming. "Why haven't the content and details of the agreements been published by the Polish press?" "How can striking workers be described as anti-socialist elements?" "Are the agreements made between the Interfactory Strike Committee (MKS) and the government valid for all of Poland?" "Could a free trade union

and an official trade union, even if democratized, coexist in the same enterprise?" The small group of Communist students tries to deflect these salvoes by using all the resources of dialectic. "The workers are not antisocialist, but they can be influenced by antisocialist ideas...." "Certain errors have been made by the leadership of the official trade union, but the union is not rotten...." "Furthermore," the head monitor interposes, puffing on his pipe, "the press could not publish all of the workers' demands. One of them," he says indignantly, "asked for elimination of Russian from the schools!"

When the general hilarity had died down a bit, a young woman rose and asked for the floor. 'She is a very well-known history prof in the Faculty," Lourek whispers to me. Silence is obtained. "Is there anyone in this room who can explain to me specifically how one creates a free trade union? How it is formed, how it should be announced, etc?" Complete silence. "Well," the young woman goes on, "this is the only thing that interests me at present."

Progressing Toward Socialist Democracy

She gathers up her things and leaves. In the next 5 minutes, the room half-empties. The next day, I learn that the professors of the University are organizing a referendum to decide whether to creat a new union or keep the old one. It is a last-minute maneuver by certain professors to try to avoid the wild and spontaneous emergence of a free trade union. This is what was explained to me, in a "kawiarnia" (coffee shop) near the university, by an old professor of economic sciences who had remained faithful to the Party.

"I am a Marxist-Leninist and very interested in the works of Althusser," he declares by way of preamble. "As a member of the Party, I am rather satisfied about what is happening. One may speak of crisis, but I think it is an economic crisis. The most negative result would be for it to be transformed into a political crisis, but I do not think so. The Party is entirely in control of the situation. In certain places there are some distortions, certain breaks between the Party and the working class, but this is due to Party members who have managed locally to defy the directives of the congress. Socialism cannot alienate the working class."

"What socialism are you talking about? The theoretical socialism of the great thiners, or its concrete realization in Poland and in the countries of the East?"

"It is the same. Socialism has occasionally been diverted somewhat. But this is normal. Confrontation makes it possible for it to get back onto the right path and progress toward socialist democracy."

"The Gdansk workers told me they were fed up with tolerating the poor living conditions in order to build a far-off 'singing tomorrows' socialist state."

"This shows that the Party made a mistake in not taking sufficient account of the aspirations of the working class as in 1956 and 1970. The Party must not wash its hands and put all the blame on the trade unions. The Communists have to be remobilized, then the trade unions have to be overhauled and the ideological battle won in those places where it is necessary; I would be prepared to advise the members of the Party to go on strike like the others." If I had suggested this to Mr W.... I won-

der whether he would have got angry or laughed in my face. Mr Jarek W..., however, is a Communist, a Party member for 10 years, and holds the post of manager in an oil refinery. By means of a slight hoax, I was able to meet him in his villa at Sopot, between Gydnia and Gdansk. Sopot, wedged between the two big industrial cities, is a kind of miracle, a small town with villas, big shaded avenues, a park, a big decaying hotel, beaches, and clean air. One might have met F. Scott Fitzgerald there at the right time. Now one runs across limousines there, belonging to the fortunate "owners of socialist Poland." At Jarek's, one drinks scotch whiskey while listening to Polish jazz on a Sony record-player. Jarek has a Schneider color television set, and dreams of buying a video cassette recorder. He showed me the video cassettes that he has brought back from his travels: "Apocalypse Now," "Hair," and two porno films from the FRG. He is surprised that I have never seen them. "But in France, thses films are permitted. I have seen them myself in Paris."

Competing With the European and Western Markets

I have a great deal of trouble getting him to talk about anything other than gadgets, Pigalle, or the Eros centers of the FRG. This interesting personage has had a lightning career in the last 10 years.

""I am a self-made man," he constantly tells me with conceit. "I was only an accountant in the Hydrocarbons Company. Now, at 40, I am its assistant manager; I travel a lot, especially to the United States."

His wife and two children live with him in this big prewar villa built in the rococo style of seaside resorts.

I had learned that W...'s refinery was not on strike, but that the workers had declared solidarity. They had even let it be known that any police intervention in Gdansk would mean an immediate strike.

"That is true," Mr W... confirms. "But we had taken measures in order for the refinery to continue to operate. It is for the good of the state. The workers' putting their private interests before those of the state cannot be tolerated for long. This is economic sabotage and a big financial loss for Poland. The workers will have to pay the piper for the aggravation of the crisis. In fact, they have not gained anything at all, but have made us lose money."

I point out to him that he is talking like a capitalist boss.

"I am not a capitalist; I do not own the means of production. The refinery belongs to the state--that is, to the workers, to me, to everyone. No. I am a modern manager. We are trying to compete with the European and Western markets, and sometimes we manage to do so."

"What do you think about the free trade unions?"

"I believe the official trade union is a little sclerotic in its bureaucracy. What is going to happen? The workers will go into the new union en masse, and the other one will disappear. In the last analysis, only one union will remain. Just as before."

"Yes, but the new one will be autonomous and self-managed?"

Jarek W... makes a little gesture with his hand and shrugs his shoulders. Clearly, this is not a problem for him. "And the Russians?"

My interlocutor seems divided on this question!

"It is quite certain that if the economic situation is aggravated because of the disorders, the strikes and the antisocialist agitation, someone will indeed have to establish order in the country. I am Polish and nationalist and I would regret an intervention. But...."

When he accompanies me to the door, we come across an elderly lady carrying a basket; she is climbing the staircase briskly.

"She is an old woman who has no resources. I give her a little money and she does housework for me."

The socialist countries can be a little paradise for some. The happy owners of the private swimming pools in the suburbs of Warsaw, for example. "They are heated in winter, and some even have a device for making waves," I was told. Or the decrepit old man with a lovely creature on his arm in a luxury shop in Warsaw. "He is a multimillionaire pharmacist. He has several shops," it is whispered to me. I would indeed have liked to meet one of the apparatchiks (the machine men), whose prosperous-looking figures are sometimes espied in the chic spots of Warsaw, in the bars of the big hotels, or whom one spots in the back of a big car. More often, they are never seen. They frequent the restaurants reserved for Party members, the government hunting grounds and certain residential districts. Yet there can be no mistaking these men when, by chance, one encounters one of them dressed in a dark suit, barely brightened by a silk tie. What strikes one especially is their nearly interchangeable faces, severe, impenetrable, with piercing eyes. Eyes that are not accustomed to being resisted. Icy. Their walk too--slow, heavy, on big crepe-soled shoes that they dearly like. I met one of these mighty ones in one of the restaurants of the old city of Warsaw. He was at the table next to mine, for a business dinner, with a French industrialist and an interpreter.

"Tell the Manager that I would be very happy to wrap up this matter as quickly as possible, in view of the events," said the industrialist to the interpreter.

"The Manager is entirely in agreement. He thinks that the present situation will not go on forever and that calm will return. Mr Minister invites you to come to the Baltic with your wife; he will have a car and a villa placed at your disposal."

"I thank Mr Minister very much. Ask him whether he thinks there will be important changes in the new government."

"The Manager thinks there may be a few replacements at the top, but that he risks nothing."

"That is not what I wanted to say," protests the businessman, under the slightly amused eyes of the Manager.

The apparatchik and his guests left quickly, and the waitress refused to reveal to me the identity of this lofty personage. As for the other apparatchik whom I was able to approach, he was at the bar of a big hotel. Dressed in Saint-Laurent clothes, wearing a little device with hammer and sickle in his buttonhole, and drunk as a Pole.

"Ah! Francouze! My Hungarian communist. Budapest." He taps his pipe and adds, clinging to his 10th Bloody Mary: "And how is Maurice Thorez?"

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END